

# *Field Naturalists Club of Ballarat* *Incorporated.*

JULY 1990

## EXCURSION - NEWS SHEET

- Meeting July 6 Mr R. Whitehead - Development of a  
Native Botanical Garden
- Meeting August 3 Dr I. Mansergh - Possums and Gliders
- Excursion July 8 Lake Esmond and Yarrowee Creek
- Excursion August 5 Ben Major Area



President: Mr K Hammond Ph.053 394534  
Vice Pres: Miss H Burgess 312210  
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Meetings as specified are held at the School  
of Mines and Industries, Lydiard Street Sth.,  
Art Building, commencing at 7.30 p.m.  
EXCURSIONS, AS SPECIFIED, COMMENCE  
FROM CROCKERS, enr. STURT AND ARM-  
STRONG STS., BALLARAT, at 9.30 a.m. for  
FULL DAY OUTINGS OR AT 1.30 p.m. for  
HALF DAY\*





### Field Reports: May Meeting

- Lyndsay Fink - Wedge-tailed Eagle attacked by relays of Magpies at Mt Clear.
- Helen Burgess - Grevillea longistyla now flowering as well as it does in spring. New South Wales Christmas Bush is also flowering.
- Greg Binns - 3 Brolgas (including one juvenile) at Middle Swamp.
- John Gregurke - 2 Brolgas flying over Western Highway at Brewster.
- Ken Hammond - Blackbird singing early in the morning.

### For Your Diary

July 26th - Committee Meeting 8pm, 1112 Ligar St - F. Williamson's  
August 31st - September 2nd Wyperfeld National Park Camp-out  
September 22nd-23rd - Angair Wildflower Show  
October 26th-28th - Halls Gap Camp-out

### Nature Quiz.

What are the following? 1. A Saprophyte?  
2. An Epiphyte?  
3. A parasite?

Mistletoe is?

Ferns on Trees are?

The Potatoe Orchid is?

Mallee Fowls belong to a group of birds called Megapodes, what does this word mean?

What is a Dunnart?

What shire is named after a bird?

Who was the first to send Australian Flora to England?

Name one common bird with Lobate toes?

The word Mallee is used to denote a certain type of plant, 1. What is that plant?

2. where do we get the word from?



## Some Thoughts on Insects.

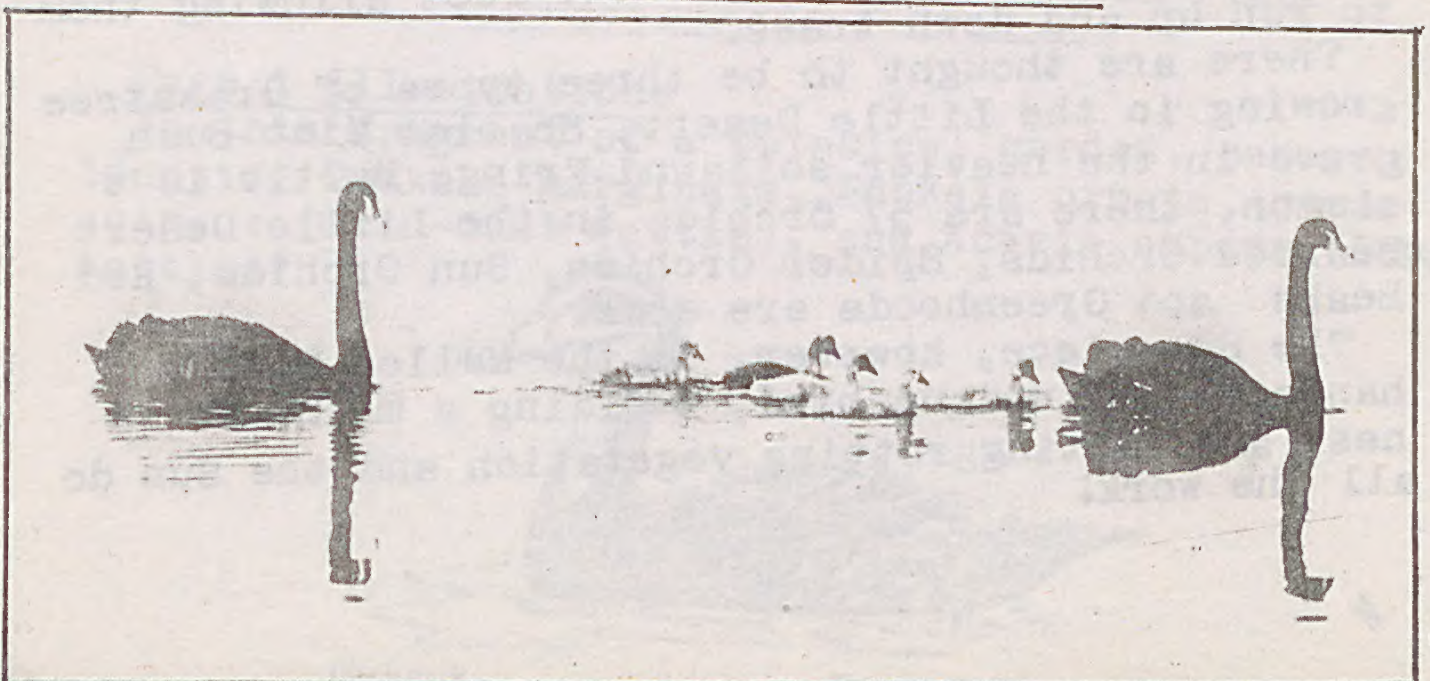
We live in an Insects' World. There are more species of insects than of any other Animal, they outnumber any other group in a count of heads.

They live from the tropics to the polar regions, in rain forests, deserts and man made structures; some even live in salt lakes and even petroleum seeps.

A combination of factors account for their phenomenal success. Their small size helps them hide from enemies and enables them to live on a minimum of food. They have a short life cycle which them a quick turnover of generations, allowing them to respond quickly to changes in environment - a new insecticide for example.

More incredible is their rate of reproduction. It has been calculated that a single pair of house flies would produce 191,000,000,000,000,000,000 descendents in four months if all survived and reproduced.

Without insects, however, the world would be a vastly different place. there would be no biting mosquitoes or flies or any of the disease transmitting insects, no crop destroyers and it would be a healthier World. But! there would be no pollinators - no crops no honey, and many of our insect birds would vanish, or should we say all birds! small animals would disappear even the larger ones too, without most of our plants and animals then Man would not survive, next time you see that insect dont tread on it!





## FLORA and FAUNA of the Little Desert.

Speaker Mr Ray Reichelt. "Wimpy"

The Little Desert Lodge is set in 117 hectares of Mallee land and is family owned and run as a holiday and educational centre, there is a total of 102 beds with toilet and shower facilities, the large dining room is air conditioned and heated in cold weather. Many overseas visitors come to the Lodge.

There has been 121 species of birds recorded many like the Diamond Firetails and Wren are resident around the Lodge.

We saw many slides of birds from Eagles to Wrens many of them visitors and migrants, some birds such as the Lapwings and other ground nesting birds are very vulnerable to feral cats and foxes,

Some of the birds shown were Chats along fences, White browed Woodswallow and young, Rainbow Birds "Bee Eaters", Spotted Pardalotes, Restless Flycatcher and three young, Silver Eye and young and that rarely seen bird the Bush Curlew or Thick Knee also shown was a Peregrine Falcon eating a Rabbit thereby helping to keep down the unwanted species.

Other Little Desert inhabitants are the hopping mouse and the Silky Desert Mouse with large ears and big veins in them, these ears serve a dual purpose - acute hearing, and a way to cool or heat the blood.

Blue Tongued lizards and Tree Dragons that live on the underside of limbs and catch their food.

Pigmy Possums are another denizen of the Little Desert, they have pads on their feet allowing them to run up and down trees.

There are thought to be three types of Grass tree growing in the Little Desert, Scarlet Mint Bush grows in the heavier soil and Fringe Myrtle is common, there are 57 Orchids in the Little Desert Bearded Orchids, Spider Orchids, Sun Orchids, Red Beaks and Greenhoods are some.

The Showpiece, however, is the Mallee Fowl a handsome and unique bird, building a mound for a nest and letting rotting vegetation and the Sun do all the work.



The mound is tested daily for heat or cold and the Hatchlings are fully feathered and the same colour as the adults. Some of them are very tame and take very little notice of people, this is no wonder as Wimpy has reared 84 by hand. The final slide was a magnifiscent Sunset.

Our Guest Speaker was thanked in the usual way and then on to supper. Thank you Wimpy for a fine evening and a job well done.

L.F.

### Introduced pests (2) The Feral Domestic Cat

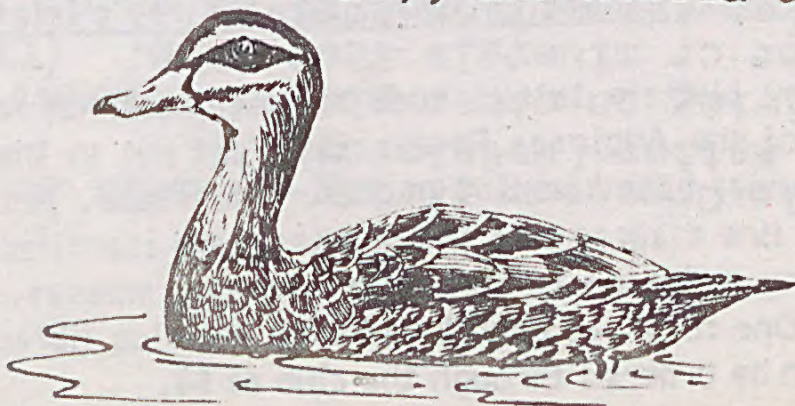
Most of the more common colour varieties of the domestic cat have gone wild or have been abandoned and have established themselves as feral animals in Australia, so there is a wide colour range of coat colours. Domestic Cats are well known to us all so their is no neccessity for a detailed description of them. Very large individuals give rise to Panther or Puma reports, especially if se seen near large dog prints. Some of the large wild ones grow to weigh 12 Kg or better.

In the 1880's large numbers of cats were released as rabbit predators, they now inhabit all habitats and raise up to four litters a year the female has six nipples.

Cats are the most efficient hunters in the World and in Australia with slower animals bred in a country with very innefficient hunters they lose out very badly, they are active both day and night and prey on birds small animals and even fish.

### Page 1 Illustrations

In this fragment of a botanical garden, can you identify *Banksia marginata*, *Banksia ornata*, *Acacia acinacea* (Gold-dust Wattle), and *Acacia aspera* (Rough Wattle)?





## Tullaroop Creek Excursion. June 3.

In contrast to the large convoy of the May excursion a small (but select!) party assembled at Clunes for the afternoon excursion to the Tullaroop Creek in the Mt. Cameron area.

North East of Clunes a brief stop was made to view the recently discovered site of a number of Anchor Plants, visible from the bridge crossing on Birch Creek. The next stop was at the ford on the Tullaroop Creek, below Fawcett Hill.

Although the weather was overcast, a pleasant walk was undertaken on the downstream stretch, leading to the upper reaches of the Tullaroop Reservoir. Here, the Creek was flowing through substantial pools and appears to be a good aquatic environment with grazing land on either side, cover is scarce but the following bird species were served: Black Duck, Little Pied Cormorant.

Whitefaced Heron, Shelduck, Coot, Moorhen, Black Fronted Plover, Kestrel, Brown Falcon, Little Raven, Magpie, Wagtail, White Plumed Honeyeater, Superb Blue Wren and Kookaburra.

After refreshments, the return journey was made via Mt. Cameron and the Clunes Swamps. It was noted that Meri Merin was dry, but the water remaining in Middle Swamp was holding quite a lot of birdlife.

Three Brolgas (adults one juvenile) were observed in the company of some 100 Shelduck North of the Swamp. The whole group made a spectacular sight when they flew back to the margin of the Swamp en masse.

As this spectacle concluded, the rain came with the failing light and the convoy turned for home.

G.B.

### Coastal Vegetation of Anglesea-Airey's Inlet Region

Mary White's latest book complements her earlier book on Flowers of the Anglesea River. It is set out in the same, easy to follow manner based on flower colour and shape. Brief descriptions and clear line diagrams of 140 species make identification easy. An interesting inclusion is a section on fungi, mosses, liverworts and lichens. One copy has been bought for the club library and personal copies can be ordered through the club at \$8.



## WVFNCA Wyperfeld Campout

The WVFNCA spring campout is being hosted by the Maryborough FNC. It will be held at Wyperfeld National Park on August 31st to September 2nd. Basic camping facilities are available (no electricity) and showers have been arranged at Yaapect. Accommodation is available in Hopetoun and Rainbow.

The program includes talks by the Park Ranger on Wyperfeld National Park and Mal McKinty, Research Officer with Land Conservation Council on the LCC Mallee Study Area.

Day activities can be chosen the following:

- Compass hike into mallee shrublands
- Heathlands walk
- Flagstaff hill and Lake Brambruk nature walk
- Eastern Lookout drive
- Birdwatching

Detailed programs are available from Club Secretary.

## Answers to Quiz

1. Vegetable Organism living on dead an decaying Organic Matter (nochlorophyl).
  2. Plants living on other plants without getting food water or minerals from them. (Chlorophyl)
  3. A Plant (or Animal) that lives on or in the organism of another species (the Host) from the body on which it obtains nutrients. (Chlorophyl)
  1. Parasite. 2. Epiphytes. 3. Saprophyte.
- Megapodes.  
Large Rooted  
Any of the narrow footed Marsupials wrongly referred to as Marsupial Mice.  
The Shire of Loman. -- William Dampier.  
Eurasian Coot.  
A Stunted Eucalypt. 2. The Aborigines.



## Botanical Notes :-

### FAMILY STYLIDIACEAE

( Trigger Plants, Styleworts )

This family is named after the Greek word, *stylos*, ( = column ) referring to the united stamens and style.

The genus *Stylidium*, is widespread in Australia. Members of the family are also found in New Zealand, the southern end of South America and in South-east Asia.

Most species of *Stylidium* are annuals or perennial herbs, with a cluster of basal leaves from which a stalk or scape arises, bearing the inflorescence.

The flower is bisexual and zygomorphic. There are 5 sepals and the calyx is often 2-lipped. The corolla has 5 united white to deep pink petals, is well lobed with a short tube. One lobe is short, has a different shape, is often reflexed and is called a labellum. At the throat of the corolla there may be 6 - 8 prominent erect appendages. The filaments of the 2 stamens are united with the style to form a column ( = *stylos* ). The anthers are attached to the top of the column with the stigma between them. The ovary is inferior, 1- to 2-celled with many ovules. The fruit is a capsule.

The column is sensitive to touch and is at first reflexed over the labellum. When the base of the column is touched by an insect, the column springs up and pollen is placed over the back of the insect. The insect departs and the column again reflexes and the stigma becomes receptive. The next insect or a later one with pollen on its back pollinates the stigma. In this way cross fertilization is very likely to occur.

A second genus is Levenhookia ( Styleworts ), named after the Dutchman who was the first to use a simple microscope ). In this genus the column is erect, is not " irritable ", but the labellum is.